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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

PHOTO SERIES NO. 24

PROCESSING TURKEYS, CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER 1958

Efficient handling, scrupulous cleanliness, and a wholesome ready-to-cook product attractively packaged--these are contributions of modern poultry processing plants to the American dinner table. In California's San Joaquin Valley, a leading turkey-producing area, numerous plants large and small operate several months during the year, processing and freezing turkeys, chickens and other poultry. These scenes are in a Modesto (Stanislaus County) plant which processes from 100,000 to 125,000 pounds of turkeys in an 8-hour day. Pictures were taken for USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.



N-27969--Live turkeys are lifted from crates and placed on line.



N-27965--After killing and scalding, turkeys go through rotary picker, then drop automatically into slant drum picker.



N-27968--After going through scalding and picking machines, turkeys are placed on slowly-moving line.



N-27966--After the birds go through the mechanical pickers, remaining pin-feathers must be removed individually.

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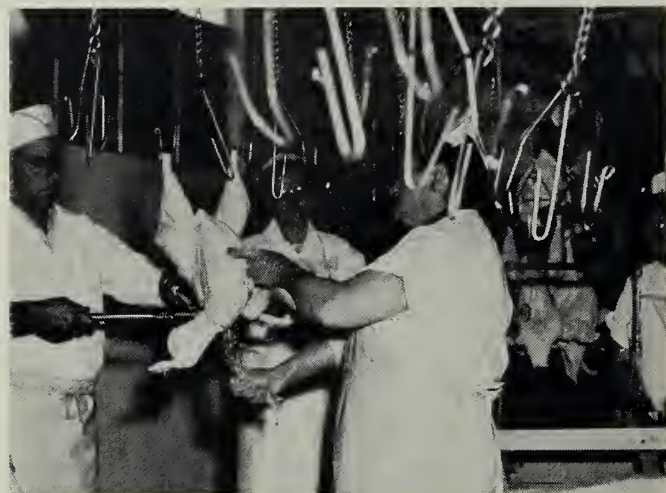
N-27964--Turkeys go through washer, then legs are cut off (right) and the birds placed in "3-point suspension" (left).



N-27960--Internal organs of each turkey receive thorough scrutiny of USDA inspector to insure wholesomeness.



N-27958--On eviscerating line, lungs and kidneys are removed by vacuum.



N-27956--Cutting off neck. After final wash, this will be replaced in body cavity of turkey.



N-27957--After moving through final wash, turkeys are graded by USDA grader, sized and placed in appropriate chill tanks.



N-27978--Crushed ice is added to eviscerated turkeys in chill tank. They will cool overnight before being packed.



N-27974--From chill tanks where they have cooled overnight, turkeys are removed and placed on drainage line.



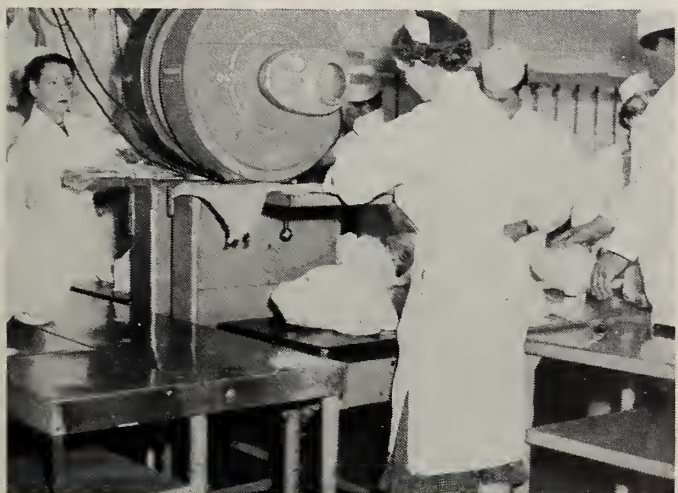
N-27983--Turkeys on drainage line. Stretching out of neck skin facilitates draining away of water.



N-27987--Turkeys are taken from drainage line, legs tucked under skin strap, giblets inserted.



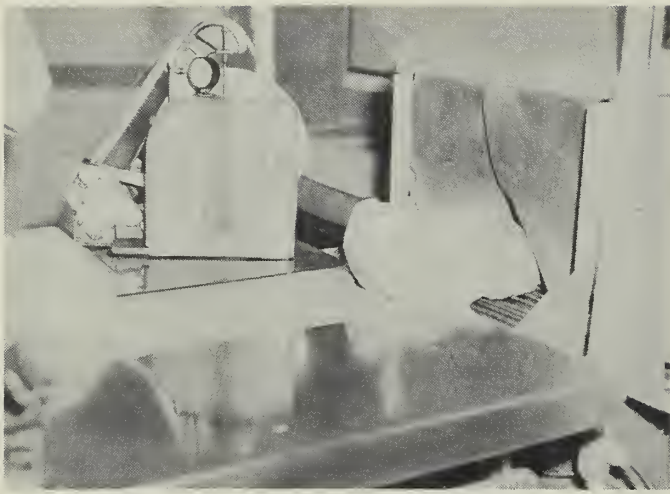
N-27986--Wrapped, chilled giblets being placed in crop cavity. Neck is already in body cavity.



N-27985--Ready for packaging, turkeys go over scales and the weight of each bird is marked on the transparent bag into which it goes.



N-27984--Vacuum lifter sucks air from bag, which then is twirled and held closed with metal clip.



N-27981--Conveyor moves packaged turkeys into "shrinker" for brief immersion in hot (210 deg. F) water. Patent transparent bag will then be "form fitting".



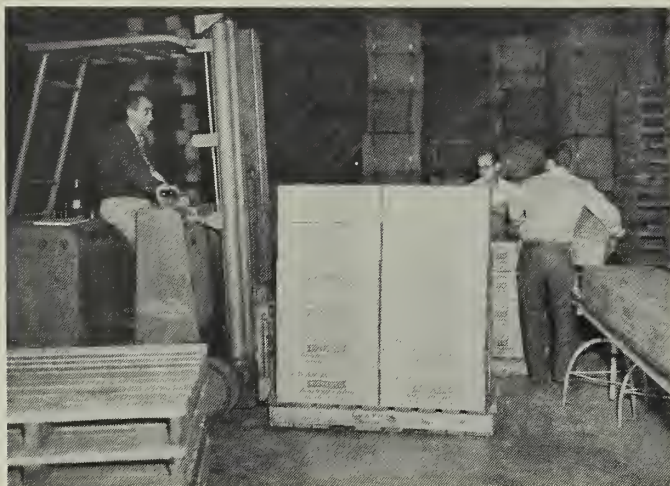
N-27980--Emerging from bag shrinker, packaged turkeys are packed by weight classes and weights are tallied by grade and size.



N-27970--Worker marks net weight of turkeys (from adding machine tape inside lid) on outside of carton.



N-27971--Cartons of turkeys, lids open for more efficient freezing, are placed on racks then moved to freezing chamber for 18 to 24 hours.



N-27972--After initial freezing cartoned turkeys are sent through automatic closer and sealer, then immediately returned to freezer storage.



N-27976--Sanitary measures extend even to the hauling crates for turkeys, which are thoroughly cleansed prior to re-use.